



CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD

NEWS Release

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Soldiers Saving Pets in Louisiana

BELLE CHASSE NAVAL AIR STATION, LA. – In addition to moving tons of cargo and thousands of Soldiers and Airmen to support the Hurricane Katrina relief effort California National Guard Soldiers have saved more than 30 stranded pets in the past two weeks.

“Our soldiers are very concerned about the losses these people suffered. So if it means saving pets, that’s what they’re going to do,” said U.S. Army Capt. Robert Atkinson, special projects officer. “While conducting operations in various patrols, if we come across animals, we’ll bring them back as long as we don’t put the animals at risk or ourselves at risk.”

The soldiers have taken in all kinds of animals. They leash up the animals and escort back to the operations center where Soldiers give them food and water and wait for civilian animal control groups to show up.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in New Orleans has rescued 1,600 animals, ranging from domestic to exotic pets like snakes and iguanas.

“What the California Guardsmen are doing is unbelievable. They’re really making it easier for us to get to animals. They’re marking doors and they’re also bringing pets right here,” said HSUS’ Jane Garrison, standing at the battalion headquarters. “They’re telling us where to find dogs and cats. We go into homes every time we see their signs.”

Pvt. Alejandro Espinosa, a San Francisco resident, recently put three puppies into his kevlar helmet and carried them back to headquarters.

“It’s just the human thing to do,” said Espinosa.

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Pvt. Alejandro Espinosa, left, and Spc Mark Guerra were on foot patrol when they found Poncho, a beautiful Pekingese dog alone in a house. The patrol group secured the dog and took it to the 2/185th Armored Battalion headquarters, where Humane Society of the United States picked it up.
(Photo by the 69th Press Camp Headquarters)